



SAFETEA-LU and I-81

Fact Sheet

September 2005



- The new federal transportation bill is called Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).
- President Bush signed SAFETEA-LU into law in August 2005, and the Federal Highway Administration is working to implement it. This process will take several months because FHWA has to interpret the bill and provide guidance to the states on how to use it.
- Funding for I-81 is included under several programs and projects listed in the bill. Funds are earmarked for additional capacity, for dedicated truck lanes, to manage freight movement and make safety improvements, and for Intelligent Transportation Systems.
- We at VDOT don't yet have a full understanding of how these funds could be used for I-81, but we are coordinating closely with FHWA.
- Virginia received a total of about \$140 million for I-81. Funding included in the bill for I-81 is not available all at once. It is allocated on an annual basis, and the bill is in effect until 2009.
- Several new funding programs are included in the bill. Each program has to be defined and set up by FHWA. Guidelines for operating the programs have to be developed. Some programs will have application processes with specific criteria to be met.
- VDOT and FHWA continue to work on an I-81 Corridor Improvement Study, which is considering the entire length of I-81 to identify its problems, needs and possible solutions. The study doesn't prevent improvements to I-81 such as installing changeable message signs or making localized safety improvements.